

# QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY

Madame Co-Chair, Mr. Co-Chair, my name is Donald J. Weinbach and I serve as Vice President for Development and Alumni Affairs at Quinnipiac University in Hamden and North Haven, Connecticut. I also serve as the government affairs officer for the University, responsible for local, state and federal government relations. In this capacity, I speak today in opposition of Connecticut General Assembly Bill 5583, "An Act Concerning the Payment of Real Property Taxes by Certain Institutions of Higher Learning and Hospital Facilities:"

Connecticut has always been a state that recognizes the diverse benefits that sound educational institutions - public and private - provide to the overall well-being of the state as a whole and to the communities that host those institutions. Nowhere has that commitment been more evident than in the recent billion dollar investments the state has made in the University of Connecticut and the state university system. The decision by the legislature and administration to do so is sound public and fiscal policy that pays huge dividends in the form of a highly educated student population, burgeoning research and development capacity in emerging disciplines at these institutions, and the flood of high quality employment opportunities for graduating students.

While not enjoying the benefit of significant investment of public dollars, private colleges, universities and affiliated health care institutions (referred to as the "eds and meds") are now also recognized economic engines. Significant investments and growth at private institutions across Connecticut, including Quinnipiac University, Yale University, Yale-New Haven Hospital, St. Vincent's Medical Center, Fairfield University, Trinity College, Wesleyan University, Connecticut College and many more have had a far reaching, positive impact on the state's economy.

At Quinnipiac alone, the development of the \$400 million York Hill Campus and the most recent addition of the Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine in the new Center for Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences on the North Haven Campus have brought thousands of construction jobs as well as permanent full-time employment to a high-wage, skilled labor force. Quinnipiac was just ranked first among all colleges and universities nationwide as measured by net asset growth over the past 10 years. The average annual percentage change was almost 13 percent. Virtually all of this growth is in the form of new, state-of-the-art construction of residence halls, a sports center and academic facilities. This asset growth has helped fuel the local and regional economy.

We acknowledge and agree that the towns of Hamden and North Haven -- which we are proud to call home -- deserve our financial support in recognition of the roles they play as our host communities. To that end, Hamden has received \$21,898,685 in PILOT and Pequot funds during the past decade (\$3,079,834 this year) in addition to direct tax revenues and voluntary payments by Quinnipiac University. In fact in 2013-14 alone, Quinnipiac paid nearly a million dollars in property taxes, payments for police and fire services and other voluntary payments.

We enjoy an excellent working relationship with Hamden Mayor Scott Jackson and North Haven First Selectman Michael Freda. We are glad to provide support to Hamden and North Haven and continue to explore others ways to help both towns as part of our ongoing partnership.

While we understand and appreciate this effort to help boost the revenues of cities and towns that are home to the state's private colleges, universities and hospitals, we firmly believe, should this bill become law, it would not only put private colleges and universities at a competitive disadvantage, but would challenge the tenet, established by the federal government and sustained at the state and local levels, that holds that charitable organizations perform functions which, in the organization's absence, government would have to perform. In return for the public service provided, namely education in our case, government is willing to forego additional tax revenues that might otherwise be collected from a profit-driven business enterprise. Our contributions to the economic and general welfare as a solid community citizen is increasing and vitally important. We respectfully suggest that now is not the time to take steam out of one of the state's economic engines.